

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1433

INFO USDA/FAS/WASHDC

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SUBJECT: WORLD FOOD COUNCIL MEETING, MANILA.

DEPT PASS AID

USDA FOR WILHELM

HUME

SMITH

Q. WEST

STATE/EB FOR TAYLOR

SUMMARY: DURING AFTERNOON OF TUESDAY, COUNCIL MOVED EXPEDITIOUSLY THROUGH MOST SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES ON THE AGENDA USING SECRETARIAT DRAFT OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MINISTERS COMMUNIQUE AS BASIS FOR DISCUSSIONS. SPECIAL GROUP WILL NOW SEEK TO INCORPORATE SUGGESTED CHANGES IN DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINAL REVIEW BY COUNCIL. TONE OF DISCUSSIONS LOW KEY. HIGHLIGHT OF SESSION WAS PROPOSAL BY PHILIPPINE MIN. AGR. FOR DISCUSSIONS ON POSSIBLE INTERNATIONAL RICE AGREEMENT WITH SEC BERGLAND INDICATING U.S. WILLINGNESS TO JOIN SUCH DISCUSSIONS.

1. DISCUSSION ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY MARKED BY SEVERAL DELEGATIONS MAKING FAVORABLE REFERENCES TO ASPECTS OF SEC. BERGLAND'S OPENING STATEMENT ON MONDAY. PAKISTAN PROPOSED THAT RICE BE INCLUDED IN A NEW GRAINS AGREEMENT. THIS PROMPTED PHILIPPINE MINAGR., AFTER UNCLASSIFIED

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SEVERL OTHER INTERVENTIONS, TO SUGGEST A CONFERENCE BE CONVENED TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF AN INTERNATIONAL RICE AGREEMENT. ALTHOUGH SEVERAL DELEGATES NOTED THAT EFFORTS TO REACH SUCH AN AGREEMENT HAD LITTLE SUPPORT IN THE PAST, THERE WAS WILLINGNESS TO TRY AGAIN. SEC. BERGLAND, NOTING GROWING US STOCKS OF RICE AND FALLING PRICES, INDICATED US WOULD BE WILLING TO JOIN SUCH DISCUSSIONS. UK DELEGATE, SPEAKING FOR EEC SAID THEY ALSO WILLING TO JOIN DISCUSSIONS. UK DELE-

GATE AND FAO OBSERVER NOTED LIMITED ROLE OF FAO COMMITTEE ON COMMODITIES IN PAST DISCUSSIONS ON RICE. DISCUSSION ON THIS TOPIC WILL BE CONTINUED ON THURSDAY. OTHER COMMENTS CONCERNED WITH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF FOOD SECURITY ISSUE. DELEGATE OF HUNGARY SAID THEY HAD JOINED INTERNATIONAL UNDERTAKING ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY. AUSTRALIA DELEGATE SAID THAT FOOD SECURITY SHOULD BE VIEWED MORE BROADLY THAN RESERVE STOCKS.

2. ON FOOD AID TOPIC, DISCUSSIONS ALSO RANGED WIDELY. SEVERAL COUNTRIES E.G. PAKISTAN, INDIA, BANGLADESH SUGGESTED THAT FOOD AID SHOULD BE BROADENED AND, FOR FOOD PRIORITY COUNTRIES, IT SHOULD BE ON A GRANT BASIS. SEVERAL OECD COUNTRIES, I.E. GERMANY, AUSTRALIA, OBSERVED NEED FOR ALL POTENTIAL DONOR COUNTRIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO WFP IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE ITS TARGET LEVEL. MEXICAN DELEGATE, IN LONG INTERVENTION, INDICATED HOW HER GOVERNMENT WAS INTEGRATING ASSISTANCE FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WITH THEIR OWN PROGRAM TO PROVIDE FOOD AID FOR THEIR NEEDY. AUSTRALIAN DELEGATE SAID THEY WOULD BE INCREASING THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO WFP THIS YEAR AND PROGRESSIVELY, INCLUDING A CONTRIBUTION TO THE EMERGENCY FOOD RESERVE

CANADIAN DELEGATE ALSO INDICATED, THEY WOULD SHORTLY ANNOUNCE THE LEVEL OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE EMERGENCY FOOD RESERVE.

3. DISCUSSION ON NUTRITION AND THE ALLEVIATION OF MALNUTRITION BEGUN BY DELEGATE FROM SRI LANKA. HE OBSERVED THAT ROOT CAUSE OF MALNUTRITION

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WAS POVERTY AND WFC SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT NARROW DISCUSSIONS ON NUTRI-

TRITION MISSES THE BASIC PROBLEM. SWEDISH DELEGATION TENDED TO AGREE WITH SRI-LANKA OBSERVATION BUT CANADIAN MINAGR. SAID MANY FACTORS INVOLVED IN MALNUTRITION AS WITNESS PROBLEM IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. USSR DELEGATE REPORTED ON THEIR DOMESTIC PROGRAM TO IMPROVE NUTRITION AND SUGGESTED IT HAD RELEVANCE FOR A NUMBER OF LOW INCOME COUNTRIES. WFC PRESIDENT, TONKO, PROPOSED THAT THE COUNCIL AND ITS SECRETARIAT TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN COORDINATING AND ENERGIZING NUTRITION PROGRAMS AMONG INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES. FAO OBSERVER NOTED THAT RECENT FAO COUNCIL HAD DISCUSSED THE SUBJECT THE SUBJECT AND PARTICULARLY A PROPOSAL THAT FAO TAKE A LEAD ROLE IN SUCH WORK. HE SAID FAO WOULD TAKE VIEWS OF WFC INTO ACCOUNT, BUT THERE WERE BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS OF A LARGER FAO PROGRAM IN NUTRITION.

4. DISCUSSION ON FOOD TRADE FOLLOWED TRADITIONAL GROUPINGS. MOST INTERVENTIONS WERE BY EEC COUNTRIES, I.E. UK, AUSTRALIA, CANADA AND JAPAN. THEY ARGUED THAT WFC WAS NOT APPROPRIATE FORUM FOR FRUITFUL DISCUSSIONS ON TRADE MATTERS. OBSERVER FROM TANZANIA WANTED WFC TO NOTE THAT OPERATION OF CODEX ALIMENTARIUS HAS HAD ADVERSE IMPACT ON LDC ACCESS TO DEVELOPED COUNTRY MARKETS FOR

PROCESSED FOODS. ARGENTINE MINAGR. SAID THAT WORDS OF TOKYO DECLARATION IN RESPECT TO SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR EXPORTS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAD NOT LED TO POSITIVE RESULTS.

COMMENT:

CONTINUED QUIET TONE OF COMMENTS AND ABSENCE OF CONFRONTATION LANGUAGE IN MARKED CONTRAST TO EARLIER MEETINGS OF WFC. THIS MAY BE RESULT OF PROCEDURAL ARRANGEMENTS AND PERSONAL SUPPORT GIVEN NEWLY ELECTED WFC PRESIDENT OR IT MAY BE QUIET BEFORE THE STORM. SUBSEQUENT TO THIS WRITING, WORK OF DRAFTING GROUP HAS BEEN PROLONGED AND CONTENTIOUS.
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